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ABSTRACT

This study examined how teachers perceived their professional development needs and how to best meet those needs in the context of systemic reform (the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990), noting plans for professional development created by teachers themselves. A stratified random sample of schools from five geographic locations in Kentucky participated. Data collection, which occurred between 1995-99, consisted of three rounds of telephone interviews and document analyses. Researchers examined school professional development plans and interviewed teachers and chairpersons of the school-based professional development committees. Results indicated that teachers contributed significantly to both the identification of professional development needs within their schools and the planning and design of professional development activities. However, they still operated under very strong policy forces that often constrained the choices available. Professional development differed in both foci and format across schools according to grade level and district size. As school levels increased, teachers were more likely to engage in innovative professional development. Small districts relied on conference attendance much more than did larger districts. Engagement in learning community activities decreased with decreasing district size. Results indicated a pattern of reliance on the traditional inservice model. (Contains 38 references.) (SM)

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Professional Development under KERA:

Teachers' Decisions & Dilemmas

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In our current era of high stakes accountability, improving teacher quality through professional development is a prominent concern among many educational leaders and researchers. In 1994, Goals 2000 proudly proclaimed

> *By the year 2000, the nation's teaching force will have access to programs for continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.* (U.S. Department of Education, http://www.ed.gov/legislation/GOALS2000/TheAct/sec102.html)

More recently, the U.S. Department of Education highlighted the concern about teacher professional development, writing "Career-long, high-quality professional development for teachers is a central and indispensable element of the larger effort to help all students achieve high standards" (U.S. Department of Education, 1999, p.3). Unfortunately, "career-long, high quality professional development" remains elusive to all but the most fortunate teachers.

For decades, researchers and teacher leaders have become increasingly convergent in their analyses and recommendations for teacher professional development. Below is a compilation of the common threads of over twenty years of research regarding high-quality professional development. According to numerous researchers, good teacher professional development[1]

- is based on view of teaching as intellectual work, recognizing teachers as professionals, and incorporates teachers into planning and design of professional development.

- focuses on student learning and is assessed, at least in part, based on student learning and changes in classroom practice.
- is connected to knowledge of the content that is being taught, and is aligned with local or national content standards.
- is ongoing, and allows time for training, practice, feedback and follow-up support for teachers to master new content and strategies and to reflect, analyze and refine their practice.
- is practical, school-based, and embedded in teacher work, yet is rooted in the knowledge base for teaching
- is collaborative, provides opportunities for teachers to interact with peers, and establishes a learning community of which all teachers are members.
- is part of a larger coherent plan for building-wide change.

The first bullet in the above list identifies the need for devolution of authority for teacher professional development to teachers, who, it is argued, can make better informed decisions regarding professional needs. Ball (1996) states, "Teacher development is considered especially productive when teachers are in charge of the agenda and determine the focus and nature of the programming offered" (p. 502). Furthermore, others argue that decentralization empowers teachers to design professional development activities customized to the local context, culture and professional needs (Daniels, 1999; ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, 1995). Although their logic appears sound, Wilson and Berne (1999) caution us that "replacing our old conceptions

[1] The above list is based on the works of Abdal-Haqq, 1996; Corcoran, 1995; Daniels, 1999; Dorph &

of professional development with new makes sense only if the new ideas are held up for rigorous discussion and evaluation. *New is not always right*" (emphasis added, p. 176).

We decided to test this line of thinking by examining teacher professional development in a context supportive of decentralization and teacher involvement. To examine how teachers perceive their needs and how best to meet those needs in the context of systemic reform, we studied plans for professional development developed by teachers themselves. The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 established ambitious learning goals for Kentucky's students and devolved critical decision-making responsibility -- particularly for professional development -- to the school level (Foster, 1999; Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, 1994; Steffy, 1993). Subsequently, each school was required to establish a professional development committee (PDC), either one formed specifically for this purpose or the site-based, decision-making (SBDM) school council. These committees controlled 65% of the funds for professional development and were responsible for creating a professional development plan, as part of each school's annual comprehensive plan.

As a basis for the school professional development plan, each PDC had to conduct a needs assessment of the faculty. The plan then defined links among the identified needs, the school goals, the objectives of each professional development activity, and a process for evaluating the effects of the proposed activities. The plans also included a description of the activity, a contact person, the resources needed, and funding sources.

Based on the data collected from educators between 1995 and 1999, we address a series of related questions. First, were Kentucky teachers, in fact, in charge of their own

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Holtz, 2000; Fine & Raack, 1994; Joyce & Showers, 1982; Little, 1984; Novick, 1996; Putnam & Borko, 1997; Sparks, 2000; Sullivan, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1995.

professional development? If, in fact, teachers were in charge, what were the formats and foci of the professional development they planned? Do decisions about professional development differ across school levels or district sizes?

Methodology

A stratified random sample of schools was selected from five different geographic regions of Kentucky. The five regions were chosen for geographic diversity and to lend political legitimacy to our study among state and local policy makers. Within the five regions, we stratified school districts by size; small districts ≤ 10 schools, medium districts =11 ↔ 19 schools, and large districts ≥ 20 schools. From each district, we chose a random sample of schools from each school level -- elementary, middle school, and high school. Because of the geographic and political concerns in constructing the sample, the final sample of schools included 13% in small districts, 25% in medium districts, and 62% in large districts. Within Kentucky, 47% of schools are in small districts, 31% in medium districts and 22% in large districts. While meeting the policy-making needs of the study, the sample lacks representativeness according to district size.

Data collection consisted of three rounds of telephone interviews and document analyses. The first and third rounds of data collection involved analysis of school professional development plans and telephone interviews with the chairpersons of the school-based professional development committees. The first round took place during the 1995-96 school year and the following summer, while the third round occurred during the 1997-98 and 1998-1999 school years. For these rounds, we obtained photocopies of each of the sample school's 1995-96 and 1997-98 Professional Development Plans (PDPs).

We then analyzed the plans, extracting data to inform our telephone interviews with the professional development chair.

We sent to each sample school a cover letter explaining the project, a consent form, a photocopy of the school's PDP, and a list of the interview questions. We made a minimum of six callbacks to each school. At some schools, as many as fifteen calls were necessary to produce a completed interview. Teachers were frequently interrupted during the interviews or had to suspend the interview to address a problem. Interviews typically required 45 minutes, although a few, involving several callbacks, lasted for nearly two hours.

The second round of data collection, during the 1996-97 academic year consisted of interviews with classroom teachers in the study schools. For balance within the study, the second round of interviews were more personal in nature, focusing on teachers' learning, their involvement in planning professional development activities, the impact of KERA, and changes in their instructional practice. The responses gathered during the second round of data collection are compared to the findings of actual professional development offerings analyzed during rounds one and three of data collection.

Over the course of this study, attrition occurred within the sample. Of the original 77 schools, 63 completed the study. The difference of 14 schools includes 6 refusals, 1 closure, and 7 schools who passively refused by failing to respond to multiple (maximum of 15) phone calls. This attrition only mildly affected the distribution of schools by both district size and school level. The largest resultant change was a 6% increase in the proportion of elementary schools in the sample (See Tables 1 and 2). Despite the attrition,

we were able to document 972 professional development activities and conducted over 200 interviews.

Table 1 Distribution of participating schools by district size

DISTRICT SIZE	1995-1996	1998-1999
Small	12 %	13 %
Medium	23 %	25 %
Large	65 %	62 %

Table 2 Distribution of participating schools by school level

SCHOOL LEVEL	1995-1996	1998-1999
Elementary	49 %	55 %
Middle School	25 %	21 %
High School	26 %	24 %

Findings

We present the findings in four parts. First, the process for identifying needs and planning professional development activities is examined. Second, we examine the formats and foci teachers chose to implement during the course of the study. Following the aggregate presentation of findings, we disaggregate the data according to school level in the third section, and by district size in the fourth section.

Professional Development Process

Kentucky teachers are definitely involved in the planning of their professional development. Fully two-thirds (67%) of interviewees reported that faculty held primary responsibility for identifying professional development needs. The PD committee chair (15%), district central office (10%), and building administrator (8%) identified teacher needs in the remaining schools.

The professional development needs of the teachers were determined through two main mechanisms. Direct solicitation of input from teachers was the primary way of identifying needs, either through formal needs assessments/teacher surveys (45%), informal teacher input (15%), or departmental meeting input (7%). Thus sixty-seven percent of the processes used to identify teacher professional development needs rest squarely with teachers themselves. The results of Kentucky's statewide testing program (27%) were the second most common way of identifying professional development needs. The remaining six percent of cases involved either the building principal or district central office identifying teachers' needs (3% each).

Once professional development needs were identified, responsibility for planning actual professional development activities shifted slightly away from the teachers who made decisions for 60% of the schools. Instead, within some buildings, a single person arranged for activities to take place, either the PD chair (18%) or a building administrator (12%). District central office personnel planned professional development activities for individual schools in ten percent of the cases.

When asked if teachers think their needs are taken into account during the professional development process, ninety-four percent of our sample responded either "somewhat" or "yes." Only six percent think teachers' needs were not addressed adequately during the process. Ironically, when the same teachers were questioned about the effect of the schools' official professional development activities on their classroom practice, a less positive portrait emerges.

In spite of the fact that Kentucky teachers under KERA have been empowered to affect professional development, less than a quarter (24%) of teachers reported that their

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engagement in professional development activities results in a "large" effect on their classroom practice. Thirty-seven percent reported little to no impact on their teaching practice, while thirty-nine percent reported a moderate change as a result of engaging in their school's professional development. However, when compared to a national sample of teachers, Kentucky educators appeared to appreciate their professional development activities more than their peers elsewhere. According the a 1999 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) survey, only 12% of teachers reported that professional development activities helped improve classroom teaching "a lot" (Available: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs99/1999080.pdf).

Professional Development Activities

The 972 professional development activities analyzed during this study were classified according to focus and format of the activity. Thirty-nine distinct foci were identified across the activities. These were then grouped into curricular activities, non-curricular activities, and non-classifiable activities. A slight majority (54%) of activities studied were curricular in nature, while forty-two percent were non-curricular and 4 percent were not classifiable.

Table 3 Distribution of Curricular Foci

Curricular Foci	N	% of curricular N = 529	% of all activities N = 972
Literacy	110	20.79%	11.32%
Technology	90	17.01%	9.26%
Curricular Alignment	85	16.07%	8.74%
Special Education	80	15.12%	8.23%
Mathematics	60	11.34%	6.17%
Science	33	6.24%	3.40%
All Activities less than 2% of total	71	13.41%	7.31%
	529	100.00%	54.42%

Table 4 Distribution of Non-curricular Foci

Non-curricular foci	n	% of noncurricular n = 405	% of all activities n = 972
Restructuring	52	12.84%	5.35%
Assessment	48	11.85%	4.94%
Discipline/Classroom Management	43	10.62%	4.42%
Individualized Activities	29	7.16%	2.98%
Instructional Strategies	26	6.42%	2.67%
KY Early Learning Profile	22	5.43%	2.26%
Catch-all Activities	21	5.19%	2.16%
Collaboration	20	4.94%	2.06%
All Activities less than 2% of total	144	35.56%	14.81%
	405	100.00%	41.67%

While most researchers tend to draw a dichotomy between traditional and innovative methods of professional development, we classify the formats of the studied activities into three main paradigms, training, learning community, and innovative. By using these three paradigms, we can more readily identify how teachers make use of local expertise within their building. As mentioned earlier, the establishment of a learning community appears crucial for the optimization of teacher professional development efforts. (Lieberman, 1995; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996)

We define each of the paradigms as follows:

Training Paradigm –Professional development activities characterized by external presenters/experts delivering their "expertise" in the form of decontextualized generic strategies to classroom teachers in a passive method disconnected from teachers' daily work (Abdal-Haqq, 1996; Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Dorph & Holtz, 2000; Little, 1989).

Learning Community Paradigm – Professional development activities that rely on and respect the local expertise, skill, and professional knowledge of teachers within

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the school building and engage teachers working together toward a goal (Fine & Raack, 1994; Little, 1993; Little & McLaughlin, 1991).

Innovative Paradigm – Non-traditional professional development activities (such as action research, study groups, research-based instruction, university partnership, etc.) that research indicates may be more conducive to teacher learning and/or educational reform than training paradigm activities (Little 1989, 1993).

Table 5 Distribution of activities by format

FORMAT CLASSIFICATION	N	%
Training	523	53.81%
Learning Community	163	16.77%
Innovative	78	8.02%
Catch-all	70	7.20%
Conference Attendance	56	5.76%
Activity scheduled but not done	31	3.19%
Incomplete Data	29	2.98%
Administrator/Counselor	14	1.44%
Parent/Teacher Conferences	8	0.82%
	972	100.00%

The data clearly indicate the traditional training paradigm of professional development continues to be the dominant paradigm. Almost a quarter (24.79%) of the activities were classified as belonging to either the learning community or innovative paradigms. Possible reasons behind teachers continuing to rely on training formats when empowered to decide professional development practices will be addressed in the discussion section.

Effect of School Level

Analyzing the professional development activities by school level revealed interesting differences in the distribution of both foci and formats of activities. Table 6 demonstrates a higher concentration on curricular topics at the elementary level when

compared to the secondary levels. A chi-square analysis on the distribution of activities supports this as a non-random distribution ($p<0.001$).

Table 6 Curricular classification of activities by school level

FOCUS	ES N = 491	MS N = 211	HS N = 270	TOTAL N = 972
Curricular	60%	48%	51%	54%
Non-curricular	35%	50%	47%	42%
Not Applicable	5%	2%	2%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

X^2 yields $p < 0.001$

When analyzing foci distribution among school levels, rather than elementary schools simply differing from secondary, the data suggests three interesting phenomena. First, it appears that reliance upon the training paradigm decreases with increasing grade level of schools (See Table 7). Second, use of innovative formats for professional development increases with increasing grade level of school. Finally, high schools appear to include "Catch-all" activities in their professional development plans at almost twice the rate of elementary and middle schools. The catch-all category refers to activities listed in schools' professional development plans that allowed for teachers to engage in a variety of professional development activities according to their individual needs. A typical "catch-all" activity description from Twin Pines High School reads

> *School/district sponsored activities that relate to personal growth, professional development and the school transformation plan.*

As demonstrated below, catch-all activities on school professional development plans were not uncommon. Although this may allow for individualized professional development, it may also result in a lack of coordination among professional development activities, which may produce sub-optimal improvement within a school.

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Table 7 Format classification of activities by school level

FORMATS	ES N = 491	MS N = 211	HS N = 270	TOTAL N = 972
Training	58%	54%	46%	54%
Learning Community	17%	17%	17%	17%
Innovative	6%	9%	11%	8%
Catch-all	6%	6%	11%	7%
Conference Attendance	5%	5%	7%	6%

X^2 yields $p < 0.01$

Effect by District Size

Analyzing the professional development activities by district size also revealed interesting differences in the distribution of both foci and formats of activities. Table 8 demonstrates a significantly higher concentration on curricular topics within small districts (<10 schools) when compared to districts with more than ten schools. While we cannot state with confidence the reason behind this phenomenon, small districts, lacking the economy of scale available to larger districts, may focus their professional development efforts on activities most directly applicable to the state accountability system that relies heavily on the results of state-wide curricular testing.

Table 8 Curricular classification of activities by district size

FOCUS	LARGE N = 604	MEDIUM N = 182	SMALL N = 186	TOTAL N = 972
Curricular	52%	52%	66%	54%
Non-curricular	44%	45%	31%	42%
Not Applicable	4%	3%	3%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

X^2 yields $p < 0.01$

When analyzing the formats of professional development activities by district size, once again, small districts differ significantly from their larger counterparts in three ways. As Table 9 demonstrates below, although reliance on training paradigm and

innovative activities is fairly stable across all districts, small districts are less likely to use the school as a learning community approach. Small districts also sparingly used catch-all as a professional development approach. Finally, small districts used conference attendance at a rate almost ten times as often as large districts and almost four times as often as medium sized districts.

Table 9 Format classification of activities by district size

FORMATS	LARGE N = 604	MEDIUM N = 182	SMALL N = 186	TOTAL N = 972
Training	54%	56%	53%	54%
Learning Community	19%	16%	10%	17%
Innovative	9%	7%	6%	8%
Catch-all	9%	8%	1%	7%
Conference Attendance	2%	5%	19%	6%

X^2 yields $p < 0.001$

Although we cannot posit definitive explanations for these phenomena, we can speculate that smaller districts are less likely to have the internal capacity for staff development and, consequently, must look outside for help. This may explain simultaneously why small districts are less likely to use the learning community approach and more likely to rely on conference attendance for professional development. The reluctance to use catch-all activities may be due to a relative lack of resources available in small districts. Lacking the fiscal and personnel resources of larger districts, small districts may maintain tighter control on professional development to get the biggest bang for the buck.

Discussion

Based on the data collected from Kentucky educators between 1995 and 1999, teachers were contributing significantly to both the identification of professional development needs within their schools, as well as the planning and design of

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professional development activities. In spite of this, we must stop short of claiming that Kentucky teachers are in absolute control of professional development. Educators within Kentucky, as elsewhere, operate under very strong policy forces that often constrain the choices available. Devolution of authority does not mean absolute freedom in decision-making. There are numerous other factors that inform professional development decisions, including statewide assessment scores and accountability designations, mandates from districts or the state department of education, as well as local administrative goals. However, within this evolving structure, teachers have the opportunity to affect professional development to a greater extent than has been the case historically. As Sykes (1996) notes, typically "teachers are frequently the targets of reform, but they exert relatively little control over professional development" (p. 465). Within the reform context of Kentucky, this condition appears to be changing, however slowly.

Interestingly, professional development differs in both foci and format across schools according to grade level and district size. Elementary schools most heavily emphasize curricular foci. Given the importance of a firm grounding in fundamental knowledge for future learning, this appears to be good news. Small districts choose to focus on curricular topics as well (66% of activities). Given the paucity of resources in smaller districts, the emphasis on curricular issues may be a financial as well as an educational decision.

When examining the distribution of professional development formats across school levels, it appears that as school levels increase, teachers become more likely to engage in innovative professional development. Furthermore, high schools use "catch-

all" categories for professional development at almost twice the rate of elementary or middle schools. One possible explanation for these patterns may be the increasing subject specialization in the upper grades. As the curricular cohesiveness found in an elementary schools erodes with increasing grade levels, teachers may choose to engage in more subject-specific activities designed to meet their individual needs. The result is more diverse approaches to professional development with increasing subject specialization in the upper grades.

The effect of district size on professional development format is also informative. Understandably, small districts rely on conference attendance to a much greater extent than do the large and medium districts. More interesting is the distribution of activities classified as "learning community." One may romanticize the comradery of the staff in schools within small districts, found primarily in rural areas. The data indicates, however, that engagement in learning community activities actually decreases with decreasing district size. One possible contributing factor to the low level of learning community formats in small/rural schools is effect of teacher turnover among the relatively small faculties in rural schools. Creating a learning community requires both dedication and time to develop the requisite level of trust and expertise necessary to support a conducive environment. Furthermore, small districts may simply have fewer people who have expertise in areas of need, prompting teachers to turn to outside providers. It is rare in small, rural districts to have a position dedicated to professional development, more frequently it is viewed as an additional responsibility for a person with a full plate of demands (Corcoran, Passantino, & Gerry, 2001).

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Although researchers and teacher advocates argue that the devolution of authority to teachers will make possible a more well-informed approach to professional development, this is not necessarily the case. Teachers choose to only slightly favor curricular foci over non-curricular topics. Furthermore, the data indicate a pattern of reliance on the much-maligned traditional in-service model – in spite of voluminous research testifying to the inadequacy of this approach. This pattern contradicts the observations of Wilson and Berne (1999) who write, "Teachers are loathe to participate in anything that smacks of 1-day workshops" (p. 197). If Wilson and Berne are correct, why did teachers within this study continue to rely on the traditional training paradigm of professional development?

The answer to this question is multi-faceted. Four possible contributing factors affecting the choices made by Kentucky teachers are

- Constraints on professional development choices
- Cognitive constraints of educators
- Time constraints
- Locus of control.

Briefly, let us examine the possible impact of each of these factors upon the choices made by teachers in this study and how the data analyzed here can inform future efforts to improve the quality of classroom instruction (and thus student achievement) through teacher professional development.

Constraints of Professional Development Choices

As we have argued elsewhere, one of the issues in Kentucky as elsewhere is the supply of quality professional development (Corcoran, Passantino, & Gerry, 2001; McDiarmid 1999;). The available opportunities shape what teachers will experience. Most of what was being provided in Kentucky were short-term opportunities, largely

dictated by the most recent school-level assessment results (Corcoran, Passantino, & Gerry, 2001). Through their consolidated plans, teachers identify the curricular areas on which to focus their professional development. Because new assessment results arrive annually, teachers frequently change their focus to address what appears to be the most pressing area. Such a reactive approach lends itself more to a series of workshops intended to remedy the immediate problem than to the longer-term capacity building through teachers' knowledge and skills recommended by researchers and staff development specialists.

Furthermore, policymakers and reformers responsible for the original drafting and implementation of KERA seem to have expected that providers would appear to offer professional development. However, as Corcoran, Passantino, & Gerry (2001) argue, the rapid change in teachers' foci, driven by assessment results, constitutes a disincentive for private providers to invest heavily in developing professional development packages. As a result, schools, districts, the state, and a few independent local consultants, by and large, provide professional development to address the short-term needs of Kentucky teachers.

Unfortunately, because of the educators' long history of traditional training or "workshop" formats of professional development, they may have difficulty conceiving of professional development opportunities in alternative formats. This difficulty is referred to as a cognitive constraint. Borrowing from institutional analysis, cognitive constraints expand the definition of factors affecting decisions to include the internal representations educators hold of their environment (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 1995). Cognitive constraints encompass more than simply rules and

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sanctions, but actually involve the social construction of actors, as well as their interests. Within organizations, such as schools, these constructed identities include certain definitions or interpretations of their environment and the actors with which they have interactions. These interpretations become routinized over time and become institutionalized as part of the identity of the organizations. In other words, they develop an inherent and self-perpetuating nature, as they become characterized as "the way things are" or "the way we do things here" (Johnson, 1984, pp. 85, 110). Hence, for educators operating within these cognitive constraints, professional development becomes defined as workshops.

Compounding the problem of cognitive constraints are the time constraints under which teachers work and decisions about professional development are made. If one reviews the list of high quality professional development traits listed in the beginning of this article, it is clear that a large time commitment is necessary. The literature is replete with references to characteristics such as "on-going," "sustained," "reflective," "follow-up," and "feedback." To think that teachers will devote the time necessary to maximize the effect of professional development opportunities, under the current organization of school calendars and the resultant time constraints, is naïve. Furthermore, parents (and unfortunately some administrators) clearly give the message to teachers that if they are not in front of their designated set of 30 children, they are not "teaching." Unfortunately, teachers are trapped within a dilemma on this issue. Understandably, parents are concerned about minimizing the effect of substitute teachers on their children, while school officials are concerned with even finding substitutes. As currently arranged and conceived, the primary job of a teacher is to be in front of her children. Leaving the

classroom, even to become a better teacher, is viewed as deleterious to both the education of the children in the classroom and the smooth operation of the school. Thus, even within a consideration of time constraints, cognitive constraints about time and the job of teaching limit the range of options available to educators.

Finally, teachers' locus of control must be considered. To explain the importance of locus of control, Wilson and Berne's (1999) observation that teachers are "loathe" to participate in workshops must be coupled with Sykes' (1996) observation that teachers are rarely in control of professional development. Therefore, one may reach the conclusion that teachers are loathe to have traditional workshops forced upon them. Teachers, like any professionals, desire professional autonomy. Ingersoll (2001) highlights in his recent study, finding that "the degree of employee input into and influence over organizational policies" is associated with lower rates of teacher turnover (p. 506). Furthermore, Grissmer, Flanagan, Kawata, &Williamson (2002) correlate low teacher turnover with higher levels of student achievement (as measured by NAEP).

In the context of post-KERA Kentucky, teachers gained significant levels of authority and autonomy. Using their new-found authority in professional development, teachers are choosing for themselves professional development opportunities that often are categorized as belonging to the training paradigm, *but they are choosing them.* This is an important distinction. It may be that the resultant empowerment of teachers by the devolution of professional development authority makes the formerly (externally imposed) unpalatable workshops, more palatable when actively chosen by fellow teachers.

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We want to be careful however not to demonize workshop formats as inherently of little value. For disseminating information purposes, workshops are an efficient means. Furthermore, because of the organizational and time constraints within which teachers operate, short-term workshops with limited follow-up often appear to be the best alternative. As we observed in earlier work (Corcoran, Passantino, & Gerry, 2001; McDiarmid & Kelly, 1997), a portion of the teachers in Kentucky, as elsewhere, conceive of professional development as something that needs to get done. One Kentucky educator notes of this problem.

> *Some teachers come to workshops for the sign-in sheet. This is a much bigger problem that lack of money.*
>
> (Corcoran, Passantino, & Gerry, 2000, p. 21)

In a climate in which some teachers view professional development hours as something to be accumulated to meet state mandates, those responsible for decisions regarding professional development may have limited alternatives from which to choose.

To improve the quality and effectiveness of teacher professional development activities, educators and the policy community must undertake a focused effort to redefine professional development as integral to teacher quality and thus student achievement. Furthermore, it must be integrated into both the formal organization of the school day and calendar, as well as integrated into the culture of schools as a critically important, on-going function of the faculty. No longer can teaching be defined solely by time in front of students.

In our era of high stakes accountability, increasing attention is being focused on the critical role of teacher quality in assisting all children to reach demanding standards.

We must be careful to help educators think of professional development as a mechanism for long-term capacity building, rather than a quick fix to raise test scores in the next accountability cycle. Failure to do so will only propagate the fractured approach to planning professional development found in most schools.

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